



CASE STORY

nobilia: Building PEFC Certified Kitchens in Germany

nobilia is Europe's second largest built-in kitchen manufacturer and was the first - and for a long time only - PEFC-certified company of its kind. This commitment to responsible sourcing has assisted nobilia in maintaining and further expanding its leading role in sustainability.



Situation

Based in East Westphalia, nobilia is Germany's leading manufacturer of fitted kitchens and number two in Europe. Every third kitchen sold in Germany is a nobilia kitchen, with 37% of the company's products being exported. In 2010, the company recorded sales of € 783 million.

The company employs approximately 2,150 employees. All its products are manufactured in Germany. The company has two of Europe's most modern and efficient kitchen furniture production plants. Every day, the company rolls out more than 2,200 kitchens, representing an annual production of more than 485 000 kitchens or 4.9 million cabinets. In 2010, the company used 13.5 million cubic meters of particle board.

Activities

Environmental protection has traditionally been very important to nobilia, along with high product and process standards. As early as 1994, nobilia was one of the first companies to introduce the DIN EN ISO 9001 quality management system. In 2007, it introduced the DIN EN ISO 14001 environmental management system. That same year nobilia kitchens were awarded the "Golden M" prize for German Quality Furniture. Since 2009, all nobilia kitchens are PEFC certified.

nobilia takes its commitment to environmental sustainability seriously and has introduced internal environmental management mechanisms; it has also placed emphasis on careful use of resources and energy. The company has always openly and transparently communicated its commitment to environmental sustainability. In light of this, obtaining PEFC certification was a logical next step for the company. nobilia has worked to rapidly integrate PEFC standards and requirements into the existing management systems of the company.

PEFC certification has already begun to yield results for nobilia. The company relies on large volumes of wood-based materials for its kitchens. PEFC certification has enabled the company to procure the required volumes of wood from sustainably managed forests. Suppliers have been asked to exclusively provide PEFC-certified products, allowing for all nobilia kitchens to be certified since October 2009.

As part of efforts to promote the benefits of PEFC certification, in 2009, nobilia chose to showcase PEFC on its stand during a home furnishings expo. A PEFC forest with real trees and forest land was included in the exhibition and flyers were distributed to around 10,000 visitors which explained the origins and rationale for PEFC certification.

Since that time, nobilia has continued to promote PEFC certification among its customers and suppliers. It has developed templates for the advertising industry for use in its own sector. It has also developed merchandise with the PEFC logo, including stickers and door hangers, which can be used to highlight PEFC during exhibitions and events.

In early 2010, nobilia included a video about PEFC on its homepage and made it available to its trading partners for use during exhibitions and trade fairs. nobilia has also emphasized the importance of PEFC in some of its work with the media, including in editorials.

Results

PEFC certification has yielded positive results for the company. nobilia is the first kitchen manufacturer in Germany to have achieved sustainability certification. Given rising levels of consumer awareness this has afforded the company a key competitive advantage, not only in Germany but also internationally where PEFC certification has become a selling point for the company.

PEFC certification also enables the company to offer clear and demonstrable evidence of the origin of the raw materials used in its products. This helps to strengthen the company's position in the market and offers nobilia and its trading partners a further competitive edge.

The management of nobilia believes that valuable wood resources will in future be increasingly scarce. For nobilia therefore sustainable forest management is vital. By participating in the PEFC initiative the company is making a contribution to a future in which forests are managed in a sustainable manner so that timber resources will still be available in the long term.

Customers' reactions to nobilia's promotion of PEFC certification have generally been very positive. Furthermore, as the number of PEFC-certified producers and products continues to grow, PEFC is gaining in popularity.

nobilia believes that its decision to select PEFC certification was the right one and its commitment to responsible sourcing has assisted the company in maintaining and further expanding its leading role in sustainability... Today, for nobilia staff, PEFC is taken for granted as a feature of everyday life.

Further Information

[Nobilia and PEFC - http://bit.ly/iqHJsS](http://bit.ly/iqHJsS)

[DIN EN ISO 9001 quality management system - http://bit.ly/e3IN1f](http://bit.ly/e3IN1f)

[DIN EN ISO 14001 environmental management system - http://bit.ly/h17w8o](http://bit.ly/h17w8o)